

Message Text

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 01082 01 OF 02 131916Z

67

ACTION COA-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 OMB-01 EB-11 COME-00

INT-08 TRSE-00 CG-00 NEA-10 MBFR-04 SAJ-01 JUSE-00

DOT-00 DRC-01 /167 W

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R 131715Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3953

INFO CINCLANT

COMICEDEFOR

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USEC BRUSSELS

USOECN PARIS 511

USUN NEW YORK 371

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 REYKJAVIK 1082

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR IC UK NATO

SUBJECT: FISHERIES DISPUTE: INDICATIONS OF DISAGREEMENT ON
GOVERNMENT MEASURES

REF: (A) REYKJAVIK 1064; (B) REYKJAVIK 1066;
(C) REYKJAVIK 1071

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. INDICATIONS ARE EMERGING THAT GOI DECISION OF
SEPT 11, TO TERMINATE FLIGHT ASSISTANCE TO BRITISH NIMROD AIRCRAFT

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PAGE 02 REYKJA 01082 01 OF 02 131916Z

AND SEVER DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH BRITISH AFTER NEXT RAMMING
INCIDENT (REFTELS), WAS MADE BY PRIMIN ALONE WITH SUPPORT FROM

COMMUNIST MINISTERS AND WITHOUT CONSULTING FONMIN OR INFORMING TWO ORGANIZATION OF LIBERALS AND LEFTISTS (OLL) MINISTERS, WHO FEEL THAT GOI POSITION NOW MAY BE TOO HARSH. END SUMMARY.

2. COMMUNIST DOMINATED PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE PARTY PASSED RESOLUTION SOON AFTER AUG 29 RAMMING INCIDENT WHICH LED TO DEATH OF ICELANDIC COAST GUARDSMAN CALLING FOR IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL SEVERANCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH BRITISH. AT PROGRESSIVE PARTY MEETING SEPT 416, PRIMIN OLAFUR JOHANNESSON, PROBABLY WITH THIS IN MIND AND ALSO IN ROLE OF JUSTICE MINISTER IN CHARGE OF COAST GUARD, ENGINEERED APPROVAL OF TOUGH RESOLUTION CALLING FOR SEVERANCE AFTER NEXT RAMMING INCIDENT.

3. FONMIN EINAR AGUSTSSON WAS IN BONN FOR DISCUSSION OF FISHERIES DISPUTE WITH FRG ON DAY RESOLUTION WAS APPROVED AND REPORTEDLY ONLY LEARNED OF IT ON RETURN FLIGHT TO REYKJAVIK. PRIMIN HAD ALREADY MADE RESOLUTION PUBLIC AND ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO SEEK CABINET APPROVAL FOR IT. AGUSTSSON WAS REPORTEDLY GREATLY ANGERED OVER FAILURE OF HIS OWN PARTY LEADER TO CONSULT HIM ON MATTER CLEARLY WITHIN PURVIEW OF FOREIGN MINISTRY. AGUSTSSON ALSO IS REPORTED TO HAVE CONSIDERED MEASURE UNNECESSARILY HARSH AT THIS TIME.

4. AFTER RETURN TO REYKJAVIK, AGUSTSSON LEARNED THAT TWO OLL MINISTERS, MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS BJORN JONSSON AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE MAGNUS TORFI OLFASSON WERE ALSO CONCERNED AND HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED. THEY ALSO OBJECTED TO RECENT JUSTICE MINISTRY REGULATION LIMITING MEDICAL TREATMENT OF SICK AND INJURED FISHERMEN TO THOSE WHO ARE BROUGHT TO PORT ABOARD THE VESSELS ON WHICH THEY NORMALLY SERVE. (THIS MIGHT PERMIT SEIZURE OF TRAWLERS ACCUSED OF VIOLATING FISHERIES LIMITS.) OLL MINISTERS BELIEVED THAT TREATMENT SHOULD NOT BE REGULATED OR RESTRICTED.

5. AGUSTSSON REPORTEDLY MET WITH JONSSON AND OLAFSSON ON SEPT 10 (DAY BEFORE CABINET MEETING) TO DISCUSS MEANS OF TEMPERING PRIMIN'S RESOLUTION. BJORN JONSSON, FORMER CHAIRMAN OF ICELANDIC FEDERATION OF LABOR WHO JOINED CABINET IN JULY, WAS REPORTEDLY VERY FORCEFUL IN ARGUING AGAINST 1) EXTREME ACTION ON RELATIONS WITH BRITISH, CONFIDENTIAL
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PAGE 03 REYKJA 01082 01 OF 02 131916Z

2) REVIEW OF NATO MEMBRTDHIP AND 3) RESTRICTION ON ENTRANCE OF INJURED SEAMEN. HE AND OLAFSSON REPORTEDLY PROMISED TO SUPPORT AMENDMENTS WHICH FONMIN MIGHT INTRODUCE. YET WHEN CABINET MEETING TOOK PLACE NEXT DAY, AGUSTSSON DID NOT RAISE ANY OF QUESTIONS DISCUSSED AND REMAINED COMPLETELY SILENT.

6. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, JONSSON AND OLAFSSON WERE SUCCESSFUL IN INDUCING CABINET TO DROP CLAUSE IN ORIGINAL PROGRESSIVE PARTY STATEMENT DEMANDING THAT GOI REVIEW ICELAND'S PARTICIPATION IN NATO IF NATO DID NOT CONDEMN BRITISH MILITARY

FLIGHTS. FINAL CABINET RESOLUTION REFERRED ONLY TO TERMINATION OF FLIGHT ASSISTANCE TO BRITISH MILITARY AIRCRAFT. SECTION OF RESOLUTION REFERRING TO RELATIONS WITH BRITISH WAS SLIGHTLY ALTERED TO SPECIFY THAT IF RAMMING CONTINUES GOI WILL BE FORCED TO DEMAND TERMINATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN SUCH A MANNER THAT "THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN REYKJAVIK WILL BE CLOSED AND ITS STAFF CALLED HOME".

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 01082 02 OF 02 132012Z

67

ACTION COA-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3954

INFO CINCLANT

COMICEDEFOR

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USEC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USOECDC PARIS 512

USUN NEW YORK 372

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 REYKJAVIK 1082

7. PRESS INTERVIEWS WITH MINISTERS FOLLOWING CABINET MEETING INDICATE THAT CONFUSION EXISTED AND DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS WERE ATTACHED TO QUESTION OF RELATIONS WITH BRITISH. COMMENTATORS

HAVE NOTED THAT THERE IS NO REFERENCE TO ICELAND'S MISSION IN LONDON. WHEN ASKED IF CONSULAR FUNCTIONS WOULD CONTINUE FOLLOWING A DIPLOMATIC BREAK, PRIMIN SAID THEY WERE NOT REFERRED TO IN RESOLUTION. BJORN JONSSON CONSIDERED RESOLUTION REPRESENTED "LEAST IMPAIRMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WHICH CAN BE CONSIDERED..." AND "MIGHT POSSIBLY APPLY FOR CONSULAR OFFICERS, SINCE THE MEANING OF THE RESOLUTION IS NOT SPECIFICALLY EXPLAINED." MAGNUS TORFI
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PAGE 02 REYKJA 01082 02 OF 02 132012Z

OLAFSSON, ON THE OTHER HAND, SAID THAT RESOLUTION DID NOT APPLY TO CONSULAR OFFICERS WHO CAN CONTINUE TO WORK. FONMIN REPORTED TO HAVE MADE A STATEMENT TO THE SAME EFFECT TO THE MEETING OF THE ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE.

8. COMMITTEE MET AFTERNOON SEPT 11 AND ADOPTED RESOLUTION APPROVED EARLIER BY CABINET. OPPOSITION MEMBERS VIGOROUSLY OPPOSED IT AND STATED THAT CMTE HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED OR INFORMED IN ADVANCE OF GOVT'S INTENTIONS. GYLFI GISLASON, CHAIRMAN OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OBSERVED WITH CONSIDERABLE ACCURACY THAT RESOLUTION WAS LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR FOR DIFFERING OPINIONS IN CABINET.

9. COMMENT: EPISODE INDICATES ONCE AGAIN PAINFUL LACK OF FORCEFULNESS ON PART OF FONMIN AGUSTSSON. EMB SOURCE INDICATES THAT AGUSTSSON WANTED TO RESIGN IN ANGER OVER PRIMIN'S USURPATION OF HIS PREROGATIVES, BUT WAS TALKED OUT OF IT BY ADVISORS. APPARENTLY WHAT OPPOSITION THERE WAS TO PRIMIN'S RATHER RASH INITIATIVE CAME FROM LABOR LEADER BJORN JONSSON, WHO NOW OCCUPIES CABINET POST OF RETIRED HANNIBAL VALDIMARSSON. HIS OLL COLLEAGUE MAGNUS TORFI OLAFSSON, A LEFT WING INTELLECTUAL OPPOSED TO MANY US POLICIES, IS NOT A STRONG POLITICIAN AND IN THIS SITUATION SHOWED SIGNS OF FOLLOWING JONSSON'S LEAD. BOTH MEN ARE KNOWN TO FAVOR ICELAND'S CONINUING MEMBERSHIP IN NATO (ALTHOUGH OLAFSSON IS OPPOSED TO PRESENCE OF KEFLAVIK BASE), BUT WHAT IS MOST UNUSUAL IS INITIATIVE TAKEN BY JONSSON TO HAVE REFERENCE TO REVIEW OF ICELAND'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO STRUCK FROM PROGRESSIVE PARTY SPONSORED RESOLUTION. DESPITE EVIDENCE OF REAL DISAGREEMENT WITHIN CABINET, POSSIBILTY OF GOI FALLING OVER ANY ASPECT OF FISHERIES DISPUTE IS NON-EXISTENT. IRVING

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